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Labour Multipurpose Household Survey topics

Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods

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The Multipurpose Household Survey (MPHS) was introduced in 2004-05. The MPHS is conducted each financial year throughout Australia as a supplement to the ABS' monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). The MPHS topic questions are asked each month from July to June in a personal interview. The MPHS is designed to provide statistics annually for a number of small, self-contained topics.

The MPHS collects detailed information on a number of labour market issues, including:

- [Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/barriers-and-incentives-labour-force-participation-australia/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/barriers-and-incentives-labour-force-participation-australia/latest-release) (conducted every two years from 2004-05; annually from 2020-21);
- [Retirement and Retirement Intentions \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/retirement-and-retirement-intentions-australia/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/retirement-and-retirement-intentions-australia/latest-release) (conducted every two years, commencing with 2004-05);
- [Work Related Injuries \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/work-related-injuries/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/work-related-injuries/latest-release) (conducted every four years, commencing with 2005-06); and
- [Qualifications and work \(/statistics/people/education/qualifications-and-work/latest-release\)](/statistics/people/education/qualifications-and-work/latest-release)
- Digital platform workers (published in [Working arrangements \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/working-arrangements/aug-2022#digital-platform-workers\)](/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/working-arrangements/aug-2022#digital-platform-workers))

In addition to the labour-related topics mentioned above, the MPHS program also includes other social topics not related to labour statistics, such as:

- Crime victimisation;
- Participation in sport and physical activity;
- Environmental views and behaviours;
- Patient experiences in Australia; and
- Household use of information technology.

For all MPHS topics, general demographic information such as age, sex, labour force characteristics, education and income are also available.

This section describes the broad survey methodology of the MPHS. For information on the four labour related MPHS topics that have been conducted to date, see the following sub sections: Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation; Retirement and Retirement Intentions; Work-Related Injuries; and Qualifications and Work.

Objectives of the Multipurpose Household Survey

The MPHS topics are an important part of the ABS household surveys program, which aims to:

- provide a range of statistics needed to monitor the social and economic wellbeing of Australians, with particular reference to important sub-groups of the population; and
- support the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs of key Commonwealth and State government agencies.

The information requirements of MPHS topics are determined on the basis of submissions from users on their needs for, and uses of, household survey data. They also reflect ABS deliberations on what is required of a national statistics program in the various subject fields, based on user contact and consultation.

The MPHS is a flexible multi-topic survey vehicle, which is used to collect and output data in a timely fashion. The MPHS includes a number of topics that require personal interview (rather than using the any responsible adult (ARA) method), and are therefore unsuited to the monthly supplementary survey program. The MPHS has a shorter development and output time than the special social surveys to achieve flexibility in responding to user demands as they arise, and to allow the ABS to respond to emerging demand and contemporary priorities in a timely way (publications are usually available within six months of the completion of data collection).

The MPHS is conducted as a supplement to the monthly LFS. Each month one eighth of the households in the LFS sample are rotated out of the survey. Generally, around 80% of these rotating-out households are then selected for the MPHS each month. In these households, after the LFS has been fully completed for each person in scope and coverage, a person aged 15 years and over is selected at random (based on a computer algorithm) and asked the additional MPHS topic questions in a personal interview. In cases where the MPHS topic is age sensitive, permission is sought from a parent or guardian before conducting the personal interview with a person aged 15 – 17. If permission is not given, the parent or guardian may be asked on behalf of the 15 – 17 year old, but are not asked questions relating to opinions/perceptions.

Unlike LFS which collects information from all members of the household from any responsible adult, the MPHS uses a randomly selected member of the household to answer questions about themselves.

Data are collected using Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI), whereby responses are recorded directly onto an electronic questionnaire in a notebook during a telephone, face-to-face personal interview or online self-completion.

Data for MPHS topics are collected each month over a financial year. This reduces the

impact of any seasonal effects on the data.